

May go, but the assemblies must

1990's election were LJI's candidates in election '80.

Why has Maulana Samiul Haq splintered away and formed JUI(Darkhasti Group)?

Maulana Darkhasti had at one time splintered away from us, but soon rejoined and was unanimously accepted as the Ameer of the unified JUI. Maulana Sami wanted to remain with Nawaz Sharif and

in 1993 they have contested independently.

Sectarian violence is worrying everybody today and it seems even worse than the ethnic violence we have seen over the years. How does your party view this new dimension in Pakistani politics?

We condemn any form of violence. Ethnicity and

proceeded against in a court of law. As a nation we all must rise above political constraints and exigencies and tackle this problem on priority.

Hafiz Sahib, political observers feel there is a direct relationship between the rise in popularity of sectarian parties and the loss in the vote bank of parties like the JI and JUI, especially in Punjab and Sindh. What are you planning to do to stem this change?

This is a national tragedy. Traditionally Punjab never bothered with ethnicity and sectarianism, but things changed ever since Mr. Nawaz Sharif became an active politician. Nawaz Sharif has aligned himself with the separatists and nationalists from NWFP, Balochistan and Sindh, thereby legitimising their political endeavours and strengthening their causes. Time will tell who has the last laugh! We are not interested in political mileage at the cost of fragmenting the nation.

Let us not forget that our Government shares equal responsibility on this account but nothing has been done seriously to address this national problem.

You have just partly answered my question. What will be the JUI(F)'s strategy to stop the mass-scale defections of your (young) vote bank to other sectarian parties, especially in Punjab?

We can only try and present our case logically. Unfortunately we are not a major force in Punjab and you must not narrow down all our problems to sectarianism. We face an equally grave danger from the trigger-happy confrontational politicians. To me ethnicity or sectarianism are equally dangerous tools to spread anarchy. We in JUI(F) are a principled set of religious people. I repeat: irrespective of political consequences, JUI shall never endorse violence. We are for democracy and respect for law.

What do you think of the present political deadlock? How does this help democracy?

The right to protest and the



Senator Hafiz Hussain Ahmad

also become the vice-president of the united JUI. In fact, he officiated first as the vice-president of JUI for about 10 days and then as senior vice-president for another week or so. Since Maulana Darkhasti has opted out of LJI, Maulana Sami had to make a choice. He opted for a solo flight with LJI and left us yet again.

What is JUI (F)'s connection with Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan?

None. They are a separate entity. In 1988 they were in LJI, in 1990 they were aligned with LJI and

sectarianism are gifts of Zia's martial law to Pakistan. A majority of these groups owe their existence to the agencies that were at play during the dark years of Zia.

We must not forget the tragic role of certain friendly countries in the present wave of sectarianism sweeping across our country. We have consciously become pawns in their hands and are letting them use Pakistan as the battleground for their interests. We feel that anyone who preaches ethnicity or sectarianism must be exposed and